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EVALUATION REPORT

Spokane Resource Management Plan

March 5-6, 2007

Acronym	Definition
ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
ASQ	Allowable Sale Quantity
AUM(s)	Animal Unit Month(s)
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
C	Custodial
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DNA	Determination of NEPA Adequacy
ERMA(s)	Extensive Recreation Management Area
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976
FLTFA	Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act
GIS	Geographic Information System
I	Improve
ICBEMP	Interior Columbia Basin Ecosystem Management Plan
INFISH	Inland Native Fish Strategy
M	Maintain
MFP	Management Framework Plan
mmbf	Million Board Feet
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NLCS	National Landscape Conservation System
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
NSO	No Surface Occupancy
OHV(s)	Off-Road Vehicle(s)
ORV(s)	Outstandingly Remarkable Values
PACFISH	Interim Strategies for Managing Anadromous Fish-producing Watersheds in Eastern Oregon and Washington, Idaho, and Portions of California
PFC(s)	Properly Functioning Condition(s)
PSQ	Probable Sale Quantity
R&PP	Recreation and Public Purpose
RAWS	Remote Automated Weather Station
RFD(s)	Reasonably Forseeable Scenario(s)
RMP	Resource Management Plan
RMZ(s)	Recreation Management Zone(s)
RNA(s)	Research Natural Area(s)
ROD	Record of Decision
ROW(s)	Right-of-Way or Right(s)-of-Way
SRMA	Special Recreation Management Area
SVIM	Soil Vegetation Inventory Method
USGS	United States Geological Service
VRM	Visual Resource Management
WSA(s)	Wilderness Study Area(s)

Introduction

On March 5-6, 2007, the Oregon State Office in cooperation with Spokane District Staff conducted an evaluation of the Spokane Resource Management Plan. Periodic evaluation of land use plans is required by the Bureau of Land Management's planning regulations (43 CFR, Part 1610.4-9) to determine the status of ongoing plan implementation, conformance and monitoring. The Spokane Resource Management Plan (RMP) was approved in 1987 and amended to address fluid mineral leasing, land tenure adjustment, off-road vehicle designations and Areas of Environmental Concern (ACECs) in 1992. The geographic scope of the plan evaluation was Eastern Washington (Border and Wenatchee Resource Areas).

During the evaluation process many resource specialists identified management and resource issues related to western Washington that they found difficult to resolve due to the lack of a land use plan addressing the BLM-managed lands and resources in western Washington. This is a particularly crucial issue for BLM-managed lands that are part of the San Juan Islands chain. Because the plan evaluation process focused on the existing plan for Eastern Washington, the evaluation process could not directly address these concerns. However the concern was noted and the district agreed to work with the Oregon State Office in the future to address this issue through other avenues.

Purpose

Because the Spokane District had received tentative approval from both the Oregon State Office and the Washington Office to initiate revision of the Spokane RMP beginning in FY 2008, the focus of the evaluation shifted from determining the adequacy of the existing plan to identifying components and resource issues in the plan requiring revision, updating, or supplementation to meet current planning regulations and other program needs. Subsequent to the evaluation Washington Office approval for initiation of the plan revision was deferred due to budget constraints.

Method and Scope

Evaluation of the existing plan included a formal review of the existing planning documents relative to the Program/Resource-Specific Decision Guidance provided in Appendix C of the current BLM Planning Handbook (H-1601-1, Rev. 3/11/05), an on-site visit for interviews and discussions with district staff and the opportunity for district and state office staff to provide additional information, data and comments for 7 days following the on-site evaluation. A Draft Evaluation Report was circulated for review and comment among all participants. This Final Evaluation Report incorporates participants comments.

The State Office developed a questionnaire to focus the evaluation. Guidance in the BLM Planning Handbook was considered in development of the questionnaire and

adapted to issues in the Spokane District. A copy of the general questionnaire is provided as Attachment A.

The Evaluation Team consisted of three employees from the Oregon State Office: Leslie Frewing-Runyon, Planning Coordinator; John Styduhar, Realty Specialist; and Fred O'Farrell, Chief Branch of Lands and Mineral Resources. Many Spokane District employees also participated in the evaluation process and provided their resource specific expertise and insights which are the foundation of the evaluation report. See Attachment B for a list of participants.

Scott Pavey, Spokane District Planner, was instrumental in scheduling appropriate staff for each of the topic areas and coordinating participation of staff via conference phone from the Wenatchee Field Office and other locations. The success of the evaluation is a direct result of his efforts. Thank You!

The body of the evaluation report is structured by individual programs or resources and follows the outline of Appendix C of the BLM Planning Handbook. Each section provides 1) a summary of the land use plan decisions required in a Resource Management Plan under BLM's current planning handbook, 2) a summary of the decisions made in the existing RMP as amended, 3) information about implementation of the existing decisions and any un-met needs, 4) summary highlighting new data or changed circumstances since the RMP was completed and identification of data needs (met and un-met) required to revise the RMP.

Results and Findings

I. Summary

The situation within the planning area has changed since the current plan and amendment were completed. For example, the population of the planning area has increased by more than 340,000 since 1987. This has resulted in a great increase in recreational use of public lands. Energy demand and modern technology have invalidated the RFD for oil and gas, and has greatly increased the interest and potential for wind energy development on BLM lands. The number of federally listed, State listed, and BLM sensitive species with habitat in the planning area has also grown.

Although much of the direction provided in the current plan is still valid, the evaluation found that direction was lacking or out-dated in several key areas, such as vegetation, special status species; fish and wildlife; visual resources; Forestry, Recreation; Travel Management; and Fluid Minerals (Oil and Gas). In addition, there has been a tremendous turn-over in land ownership since the current plan and amendment were prepared. Application of RMP guidance to the vast acreage of newly acquired lands is often unclear. The analysis conducted for the EISs associated with the RMP and amendment is also outdated. As a result, tiering of analysis of current actions to this programmatic EIS is often not valid. The EIS for an RMP serves as a programmatic EIS for future actions in multiple programs. Frequently the results section says that analysis of effects on a

resource is done at the project level. This is because of two things: 1) lack of direction in the RMP, and 2) the RMP EIS did not analyze it.

II. Natural, Biological, and Cultural Resources

A. Air

Required plan decisions and allocations include identification of desired outcomes and area-wide criteria or restrictions, in cooperation with the appropriate air quality regulatory agency, that apply to direct or authorized emission-generating activities, including the Clean Air Act's requirements for compliance with applicable National Ambient Air Quality Standards (Section 109), State Implementation Plans (Section 110), Control of Pollution from Federal Facilities (Section 118), Prevention of Significant Deterioration, including visibility impacts to mandatory Federal Class I Areas (Section 160 et seq.), and Conformity Analyses and Determinations (Section 176(c)).

The existing plan does not address air quality. Implementation activities, including NEPA analyses, do address compliance at the project scale. Specifically, the BLM complies with Washington Department of Ecology air quality standards and approved burn days. The district maintains 5 RAWS stations.

In anticipation of the plan revision, district staff identified the following program and resource areas as interacting with air quality: prescribed fire; post harvest site preparation; wind erosion; noxious weed program (as related to temperature and wind drift during spray treatments); and development of existing mineral leases. Regarding oil and gas development the existing Reasonably Foreseeable Development (RFD) scenario is thought to be outdated and the effects analysis in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) does not specifically address air quality impacts.

B. Soil and Water

Required plan decisions and allocations include identification of desired outcomes (including standards or goals under the Clean Water Act), identification of watersheds or specific soils that may need special protection from the standpoint of human health concerns, ecosystem health, or other public uses. For riparian areas, identification of desired width/depth ratios, streambank conditions, channel substrate conditions, and large woody material characteristics is required. Identification of areawide use restrictions or other protective measures to meet Tribal, state and local water quality requirements including identification of measures, including filing for water rights under applicable state or Federal permit procedures, to ensure water availability for multiple use management and functioning, healthy riparian and upland systems.

The existing plan does not specifically identify desired outcomes for soil or water resources, however the grazing and forestry sections of the plan establish limited areawide restrictions and protective measures designed to protect overall environmental

functions including a 50% forage utilization cap and designation of multiple use forest set-aside areas for protection of Riparian, Wildlife Habitat, and ACEC values and allocation of specific areas for "low-intensity timber production".

Soil and water impacts and mitigation measures are currently analyzed and implemented at the project scale. Other implementation activities since publication of the plan have included general monitoring of water quality, macro-invertebrate surveys (as an indicator of long-term water quality trends), drinking water testing at administrative sites (primarily acquired lands), mining site water quality monitoring, and streamflow monitoring for fisheries using USGS gauges. Water quality monitoring emphasis has shifted over time to focus on monitoring sites above and below BLM-managed lands. Forest management activities have followed the Washington State Forest Practices Act and the district has been implementing the BLM Rangeland Standards and Guides which amended the plan in 1997. The district has actively participated in the Yakama River adjudication process.

Since publication of the Resource Management Plan, the Washington Department of Ecology has identified 303d listed streams within the state. Primary limiting factors include temperature, pH, and fecal coli form. One 303(d) listed stream segment at Rockyford on Crab Creek flows through BLM ownership. High pH readings are most likely related to the geology of the channel substrate, and not related to land use activities on adjacent BLM lands.

In anticipation of the plan revision, district staff identified a need to update the water rights records within the planning area, especially for acquired lands. Soil Conservation Service data was identified as a data source for soil profiling. District staff identified the following program and resource areas as interacting with soil and water resources: road construction and other surface disturbing development; leasable and locatable mineral developments; Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use; grazing; forestry; fisheries; noxious weeds; ESA plants; and recreation. Regarding oil and gas development, the existing RFD scenario is thought to be outdated and the effect analysis in the EIS does not specifically address soil and water impacts of energy development.

C. <u>Vegetation</u>

Required plan decisions and allocations include identification of desired outcomes for vegetative resources, including the desired mix of vegetative types, structural stages, and landscape and riparian functions; to provide for native plant, fish, and wildlife habitats and livestock forage. Desired outcomes (goals and objectives) may be established at multiple scales. Identification of areas of ecological importance and designation of priority plant species and habitats, including special status species and populations of plant species recognized as significant for at least one factor such as density, diversity, size, public interest, remnant character, or age. Identification of actions and area-wide use restrictions needed to achieve desired vegetative conditions. In areas where Healthy Forests Restoration Act authorities are to be used, identify old growth forest stands and provide management direction to maintain, or contribute toward the restoration of, the

structure and composition of old growth forest stands in areas where these authorities will be used.

The existing RMP does not express desired outcome for vegetation except as related to forage utilization and areas closed to grazing or timber harvest to protect various habitat values. Vegetation management direction is contained within program specific direction for grazing, forestry, and weeds. The existing RMP notes that "...some individual trees that are more than 200 years old. However in no instance is there a large enough concentration of old growth trees to warrant classification as an 'old growth forest' or old growth stand." Subsequent direction from other sources such as Rangeland Health Standards and Guides, sage/sharptail grouse and other State recovery plans, conservation agreements for Canada Lynx and 3 rare plants, PACFISH, INFISH, and ICBEMP are used in addition to the RMP to guide project implementation.

Vegetation impacts are currently assessed at the project and allotment management plan scales. The existing RMP places emphasis on management of I (Improve) allotments where BLM-managed lands are relatively blocked. Ecological Site Inventory data is only available on I allotments and is very old unless updated by rangeland health assessments. M (Maintain) and C (Custodial) designations are given to allotments containing significant private ownership. Monitoring has occurred only on I allotments and on other allotments where Cooperative Resource Management Plans are in place. Acquired grazing lands have been managed as I allotments.

In anticipation of the plan revision, district staff identified a need to update special status plant lists, acquire vegetation inventory data area-wide and for acquired lands (SFIM, NRCS). Emerging issues include microbiotic crusts and protection of sagebrush steppe ecosystems. Properly Functioning Condition (PFC) has not been utilized to assess riparian vegetation and staff expressed a need and desire to utilize this assessment tool as part of the vegetation management program.

D. <u>Special Status Species</u>

Required plan decisions and allocations include identification of desired outcomes, strategies, restoration opportunities, use restrictions, and management actions to conserve and recover special status species. Desired outcomes may incorporate goals and objectives from recovery plans and conservation strategies or identify ecologically important areas or scarce, limited habitats. Goals and objectives may be species or habitat specific and can be established at multiple scales (i.e., fine, mid, and broad) to fully understand the context of the larger landscape. Land use plan decisions should be clear and sufficiently detailed to enhance habitat or prevent avoidable loss of habitat pending the development of implementation-level plans. This may include identifying stipulations or criteria that would be applied to implementation actions. Land use plan decisions should be consistent with BLM's mandate to recover listed species and should be consistent with objectives and recommended actions in approved recovery plans, conservation agreements and strategies, MOUs, and applicable biological opinions for threatened and endangered species.

The existing plan directs that sensitive species will be accorded the same consideration as if they were listed species. The plan directs pre-project surveys and specifies that activities will be prohibited if they jeopardize the continued existence of the species. No stipulations or criteria are established for application to implementation activities.

Special status species and habitats are currently managed in accordance with a variety of federal and state recovery plans, PACFISH, INFISH, conservation agreements, and the Washington Natural Heritage Program. Of special note is that under the State Recovery Plan for Sage Grouse, BLM has reduced forage utilization on some allotments to 35%.

In anticipation of the plan revision, district staff identified a need to update special status species lists, revisit and revise leasing stipulations, and consider alternative management direction that incorporates all of the accumulated species management direction from all of the sources listed above. Because the list is so large and constantly evolving, the revised RMP should clearly indicate that lists of special status species are routinely updated through plan maintenance. Examples could be: federally listed and proposed species, BLM's special status species list, and the Washington Natural Heritage and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's special status species lists.

E. Fish and Wildlife

Required planning decisions and allocations include designation of priority species and habitats, in addition to special status species, for fish or wildlife species recognized as significant for at least one factor such as density, diversity, size, public interest, remnant character, or age. Descriptions of desired habitat conditions and/or population for major habitat types should support a wide variety of game, non-game, and migratory bird species; acknowledge the states' roles in managing fish and wildlife, work in close coordination with state wildlife agencies, and draw on state comprehensive wildlife conservation strategies. Identification of actions and area-wide use restrictions needed to achieve desired population and habitat conditions while maintaining a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple-use relationships.

The existing land use plan includes a listing of special status species and fish and wildlife species of interest. It directs evaluation of species impacts on a case-by-case basis.

Fish and wildlife habitats are currently managed at the project scale based on direction provided in state management plans for big game species and state and federal plans and agreements for special status species. Management challenges include lack of information on habitat needs/carrying capacity for most species, lack of State established population targets, and the dispersed pattern of BLM managed lands which limit the ability to manage habitat.

In anticipation of the plan revision, district staff identified the need to update existing lists and incorporate desired outcomes, management goals, standards and guides, and direction from BLM plans, the Interior Columbia Basin Strategy, PACFISH, INFISH,

state agency plans, and other similar sources. Because the list is so large and constantly evolving, the revised RMP should clearly indicate that lists of special status species are routinely updated through plan maintenance. Habitat mapping in I allotments was mentioned as a possible data source and a suggestion was made to incorporate fish and wildlife habitat needs into revised land tenure adjustment criteria. Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife has recently developed a new wildlife strategy and was identified as a key partner in development of a plan revision. West Nile Virus was identified as a potential management issue.

F. Wild Horses and Burros

This was not identified as a program area of interest or controversy in the planning area. There are no established Herd Management Areas within the district. Ongoing adoption activities (of horses from outside the planning area) were not considered a land use plan issue.

G. Cultural Resources

Required plan decisions and allocations include identification of special cultural resource restrictions that may affect the location, timing, or method of development or use of other resources in the planning area. Identification of site-specific use restrictions from cultural resources currently being actively managed. Identification of area wide criteria for recognizing potential cultural resource conflicts, such as geographic characteristics of sacred sites, historic properties, or cultural landscapes (springs, ridges, peaks, caves, and rock shelters, for example). Identification of measures to pro-actively manage, protect, and use cultural resources, including traditional cultural properties. All cultural properties in the RMP area, including cultural landscapes, must be allocated to one of the following uses: a. scientific use, b. conservation for future use, c. traditional use, d. public use, e. experimental use, or f. discharged from management.

The existing plan directs pre-project cultural resource clearances, consultation with the Washington State Historic Preservation Officer and identifies five *potential* best management practices (emphasis added). The existing plan does not allocate existing cultural resources into the five categories.

The District consulted with SHPO and some, but not all, interested tribes, during the planning process for the current RMP and Amendment. However, since there was no consultation with some tribes, and many of the RMP decisions for which consultation did occur are now outdated.

Current project implementation follows existing plan direction related to clearances and consultations. Best management practices are applied as needed. The Colville Tribe has requested intense inventories for all grazing permit renewals. The District is currently dealing with this request at the individual project level. However, should the BLM response set a precedent, and other Tribes request the same level of inventory, then it would become an issue to address in an RMP revision.

In anticipation of the plan revision, staff identified the need to compile the limited available cultural resource data and literature. The Saddle Mountains have been identified by the tribes and the public as both a Traditional Cultural Property and an area of high recreational use. Resource use conflicts are known to exist at this site. Confidentiality and the reluctance of tribes to reveal resource and site information were identified as a management concern. The need for genuine consultation with the twelve treaty and executive order tribes and one unrecognized tribe was identified. District staff expressed that consultation at the RMP level could facilitate future implementation and project level consultations. Potential cross-border interest by Canadian tribal entities in water quality and fisheries issues were identified, however, no consultation with Canadian tribes has occurred in the past and consultation with Canadian tribal entities is not required by law or regulation.

H. Paleontology

Required plan decisions and allocations include identification of criteria or use restrictions to ensure that (a) areas containing, or that are likely to contain, vertebrate or noteworthy occurrences of invertebrate or plant fossils are identified and evaluated prior to authorizing surface-disturbing activities; (b) management recommendations are developed to promote the scientific, educational, and recreational uses of fossils; and (c) threats to paleontological resources are identified and mitigated as appropriate.

The 1985 Resource Management Plan designated the Webber Canyon ACEC because of paleontological values. However the ACEC designation was revoked by the 1992 plan amendment. The following justification was cited, "...because evaluations subsequent to its designation by both contract paleontologists and district resource specialists, indicated that where were no significant paleontological resource values at this site, and that returning this area to multiple use would not result in any deterioration of the values that are present."

Current management actions consider paleontolgical values on a case-by-case basis. This is a relatively infrequent resource in the area, with existing deposits being Pleistocene Secondary Deposits. In the past, some land exchanges were not consummated because of multiple values, including paleontological.

In anticipation of the plan revision, district staff identified several areas (Klondike Mountain, Saddle Mountain, Rattlesnake Hills and Mount Elizabeth) of likely paleontological values where additional inventories could enhance knowledge and result in better management direction.

I. Visual Resources

Required plan decisions and allocations include designation of VRM management classes for all areas of BLM land, based on an inventory of visual resources and management considerations for other land uses. VRM management classes may differ from VRM inventory classes, based on management priorities for land uses.

The existing Resource Management Plan is silent regarding Visual Resource Management inventory or management. Although some inventory data and designations can be traced back to the Management Framework Plan (MFP) (1979) a complete inventory is not available.

VRM is currently considered during project analysis when it is determined to be an issue. In anticipation of the plan revision, district staff identified the need to complete visual resource inventories. This was considered a high priority because potential wind energy developments are thought to have a high visual impact potential. Some discussion was held regarding prioritizing inventories in areas of blocked BLM lands and assuming low inventory rating in scattered tract areas.

J. Wildland Fire Management

Required plan decisions and allocations include identification of landscape-level fire management goals and objectives, which would be achieved through allowable uses and management actions. Use of fire regime/condition class methodology to identify desired wildland fire conditions is required. Identification of allowable uses and management actions to achieve the fire management goals and objectives, and support the goals and objectives for vegetation, wildlife, and other resources and identification of the types of fuels management or vegetation management treatments (e.g., mechanical, biological, and chemical treatments and prescribed fire) that would be implemented is required. The RMP should establish landscape-scale fire management priorities and provide criteria that will guide more site-specific priorities at the fire management plan level.

The existing RMP provides general direction stating that wildland fires will be suppressed to protect public safety, property, and resource values. Wildland fire use and fire regime/condition class, and use of prescribed fire are not addressed. A fire management plan was completed two years ago and provides more detailed management direction—especially related to fuels treatments and use of prescribed fire. However, this document was produced internally and was not subject to public review under NEPA. The district also maintains an internal 5-year fuels plan as part of the funding and project development process. NEPA documentation is completed at the project scale for all fuels treatments.

Current fire suppression services are provided under contract by Washington Department of Natural Resources (WA-DNR) and US Forest Service. WA-DNR has produced a map identifying Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) areas and numerous communities have developed fire management plans.

In anticipation of the plan revision, district staff suggested that many of the required components have already been developed through program specific direction, identification of WUI areas, and community fire management plans subsequent to the 1985 RMP and will simply need to be incorporated into the RMP. A need to establish post-fire rehabilitation priorities/criteria in the revised RMP was identified. Wildland fire

use was identified as inappropriate for use except possibly within the Juniper Dunes Wilderness due to the dispersed land pattern.

K. Wilderness Characteristics

Required plan decisions and allocation include those needed to protect or preserve wilderness characteristics (naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude, and outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation), including goals and objectives to protect the resource and management actions necessary to achieve these goals and objectives. This includes conditions of use for authorized activities that would avoid or minimize impacts to wilderness characteristics.

The existing RMP does not specifically address wilderness characteristics. Management direction is specified for the one designated Wilderness Area and the one Wilderness Study Area (WSA).

In anticipation of the plan revision, staff discussed the current State Office direction directing re-inventory for wilderness characteristics as a potential workload, however because of the small size and scattered nature of many BLM managed parcels, these could potentially be quickly analyzed to determined if wilderness characteristics exist. Scoping could also help in identification of areas with wilderness characteristics.

L. Cave and Karst Resources

Required plan decisions and allocations include identification of significant caves as mandated by the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act of 1988. For each designated significant cave, consider whether or not an administrative designation (e.g., ACEC) is needed to provide adequate protection for significant cave resources. Setting of both management objectives and prescriptions for each designated significant cave. Management objectives should be outcome-based (i.e., not facility- or project-based). Setting prescriptions should specify conditions needed to facilitate achievement of the management objectives.

The current plan is silent regarding cave and karst resources.

Karst resources are associated with limestone deposits which do not occur in the planning area. There are no known natural caves within the planning area, however, numerous abandoned mine shafts provide similar habitat.

In anticipation of the plan revision, district staff recognized that cave resources could be identified by the public or other interested parties through scoping. A need to address Abandoned Mine Land while being sensitive to the habitat needs they provide was mentioned by both the wildlife and mineral staff.

II. Resource Uses

A. Forestry

Required land use plan decisions and allocations include identification of characteristics (indicators) to describe healthy forest conditions (i.e., desired outcomes) for forest/woodland types found within the planning area. Identification of the suite of possible management actions (including appropriate harvest, reforestation and forest development methods) and associated best management practices, that can be applied to meet desired outcomes. Identification of areas that are available and have the capacity for planned, sustained-yield timber harvest or special forest product harvest and a probable sale quantity (PSQ) should be determined, if possible, for those areas determined to be available for harvest through the planning process.

The existing 1987 plan identifies 44,443 acres of 54,757 acres of forestland as commercial and establishes an annual sale quantity (ASQ) of 3.98 mmbf/year and 39.8 mmbf/decade. In 1993, BLM abandoned ASQ as a management target for public domain forestlands. Harvest on 1,710 acres of previously uncut commercial forestland was deferred for 5 years pending an evaluation for old growth. The existing 1987 plan includes Standard Design Features and Operations Procedures in Appendix C for timber sale planning.

Since completion of the plan, 25 mmbf has been harvested. This is below the amount projected. The majority of sales have been byproducts of forest restoration or fuels treatments. Land tenure adjustments have resulted in no net change in forested acres or commercial forestlands. The evaluation of previously uncut acres was recently completed and only about 130 acres of old growth timber was found.

In anticipation of the plan revision, district staff identified a need to update the Standard Design Features and Operations Procedures to include specific direction for forest restoration and fuels treatments.

B. Livestock Grazing

Required land use plan decisions and allocations include re-visitation of previous decisions on lands available or not available for livestock grazing (see 43 CFR 4130.2(a)), considering the following factors:

1. other uses for the land;
2. terrain characteristics;
3. soil, vegetation, and watershed characteristics;
4. the presence of undesirable vegetation, including significant invasive weed infestations; and
5. the presence of other resources that may require special management or protection, such as special status species, Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs), or ACECs.

For lands available for livestock grazing, identification on an area-wide basis of both the amount of existing forage available for livestock (expressed in animal unit months) and the future anticipated amount of forage available for livestock with full implementation of the land use plan while maintaining a thriving natural ecological balance and multiple-use relationships. The land use plan needs to describe how these public lands will be managed to become as productive as feasible for livestock grazing, including a description of possible grazing management practices such as grazing systems, range improvements (including land treatments), changes in seasons of use and/or stocking rates. The RMP should include identification of guidelines and criteria for future allotment-specific adjustments in the amount of forage available for livestock, season of use, or other grazing management practices.

The existing 1987 plan specifies 30,073 AUMS on 390 Section 15 allotments on 307,603 acres of BLM-managed lands. The allotments were prioritized for management -- 16 Improve, 36 Maintain, 79 Custodial 1 (C1)(custodial allotments that allow for improvement with increased cooperation or improved manageability through land acquisition), 259 Custodial 2(C2). No allotments were identified as unallocated. A utilization standard of 50% is established by the plan with some areas at 30% utilization to protect multiple resource values (wildlife). Table 2-9 of the RMP identifies specific range improvement for 16 Improve Allotments, including seeding (944 acres), brush control (167 acres), fence (32.0 miles), spring developments (15), pipelines (8.0 miles), catchments (3), cattleguards (6), stock tanks (25), and wells (1).

Current district practice is to renew grazing permits using a Determination of NEPA Adequacy (DNA). Sixteen additional I allotments have been added – primarily due to acquired lands and blocking up of former C1 allotments. Some allotments categorized as I allotments should be re-categorized due to changed in public land acreage within allotments and changes in allotment priority due to acquisitions. Evaluation of Land Health Standards has been completed on 28 Improve allotments. Allotment Management Plans or Cooperative Management Plans are in place on 23 allotments. The majority of rRange improvements in Table 2-9 have not been completed. Other improvements became higher priority due to land exchanges and actual range conditions. The Spokane District has developed IM SP-2002-001 District Policy for Implementing Rangeland Health and Processing Grazing Lease Renewals to clarify the lease renewal process and priorities.

In anticipation of the plan revision, district staff felt there was a need to revisit the 50% utilization standard based on new information (e.g. lynx habitat), management direction, and information from Rangeland Health Evaluations. Each allotment categorization will need to be reviewed. There was concern expressed by staff about the availability of vegetation data and the limited number of Land Health Evaluations completed. SFIM was the only areawide dataset mentioned by staff, however, they expressed concern about the utility of the dataset. Staff also identified a need to proactively address post acquisition grazing management. Utilization of Determinations of NEPA Adequacy (DNA) for grazing permit renewals was identified as an important management practice to maintain into the future.

C. Recreation and Visitor Services

Required land use plan decisions and allocations include identification of Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMAs) with delineation of discrete Recreation Management Zone (RMZ) boundaries. For each RMZ, make the following land-use allocation decisions:

1. Identify the corresponding recreation niche to be served;
2. Write explicit recreation management objectives for the specific recreation opportunities to be produced and the outcomes to be attained (activities, experiences, and benefits);
3. Prescribe recreation setting character conditions required to produce recreation opportunities and facilitate the attainment of both recreation experiences and beneficial outcomes, as targeted above (the recreation opportunity spectrum is one of the existing tools for both describing existing setting character and prescribing desired setting character); and
4. Briefly describe an activity planning framework that addresses recreation management, marketing, monitoring, and administrative support actions (e.g., visitor services, permits and fees, recreation concessions, and appropriate use restrictions) necessary to achieve explicitly-stated recreation management objectives and setting prescriptions.

Areas not delineated as SRMA are an Extensive Recreation Management Area (ERMA). Land use plan decisions must include recreation management objectives for all ERMAs. Consider addressing visitor health and safety, user conflict and resource protection issues in particular through these recreation management objectives.

The existing plan does not identify SRMAs or ERMAs. Recreation program emphasis were identified for several of the 13 management areas designated in the 1987 ROD and have been carried forward into the current management areas as consolidated in the 1982 plan amendment . Off-highway vehicle management, hunting, and fishing were key issues at the time of the 1987 plan decision.

Subsequent to the plan, the district has developed a district-wide vision for recreation and is utilizing the vision to move forward with activity and project planning in the recreation program. The vision encompasses the entire district, including lands in western Washington. A gap in management direction and the need for land use planning on the west-side was identified to support recreation management in the San Juan Islands. A proposal was set forward by the district to establish another Management Area for the San Juan Islands for inclusion in the plan.

In anticipation of the plan revision, district staff felt that the existing district vision plan provides a strong starting point for plan development. Staff felt sufficient data and professional expertise were available to identify potential areas for SRMA designation. Recreation Opportunity Spectrum data is not available. The following unmet program

needs were identified as issues for the planning process: 1) the need to provide limits or criteria for issuance of Special Recreation Use Permits, 2) specific direction related to fee sites, 3) provision of management direction for Yakima Canyon, 4) the need to acquire access to public lands, especially acquired lands in the Juniper Dunes area, 5) withdrawal of recreation sites, and 6) provision of management direction for acquired lands. A desire to highlight environmental education, accessibility, partnerships and the volunteer program was expressed. Opportunities to work cooperatively with the botany and wildlife programs to expand interpretive services were specifically identified.

BLM is participating with the State of Washington in the development of a State-wide Recreation Strategy that can be utilized to provide the regional context for development of BLM management direction.

D. Comprehensive Trails and Travel Management

Required plan decisions and allocations include delineation of travel management areas and designation off-highway vehicle management areas. For travel management areas (polygons) this includes identification of acceptable modes of access and travel for each travel management area (including over-land, over-water, over-snow and fly-in access [remote airstrips and float planes]). All public lands are required to have off-highway vehicle area designations. Areas must be classified as *open*, *limited*, or *closed* to motorized travel activities. Criteria for open, limited, and closed area designations are established in 43 CFR 8340.0-5(f), (g) and (h), respectively. Designation of qualifying BLM Scenic or Back Country Byways and national recreation trails through the planning process.

The existing plan contains designation of areas *open*, *limited*, or *closed* to motorized travel activities. A total of 230,500 acres open, 8,980 acres seasonally limited to designated roads and trails, 54,750 acres permanently restricted to designated roads and trails, and 13,418 closed to ORV use. The 1992 amendment made minor adjustments to OHV designation – primarily to accommodate land tenure adjustments made after 1987. Designations in 1992 were 221,611 acres open, 8,980 acres seasonally limited to designated roads and trails, 83,991 acres permanently restricted to designated roads and trails, and 13,418 closed to ORV use. Other modes of transportation, especially winter uses and mountain bikes, are not addressed by the existing plan.

Current plan implementation actions have been limited since few actions other than the open, closed, and limited designations were directed by the plan. Current direction is not sufficient to manage the existing travel management demands on BLM-managed lands, especially on acquired lands which have not been specifically considered for designation as open, limited, or closed. BLM-managed lands have experienced increased pressure from urbanization which has resulted in inappropriate and incompatible motorized use levels in certain areas.

In anticipation of a plan revision, the staff district sees a need to develop a comprehensive travel management plan, update existing transportation maps in the existing 33 recreation

areas and develop new maps for lands outside designated recreation areas. Opportunities to consider Backcountry Byways and National Historic Trail designations exist, including water trails. District staff anticipates working closely with adjoining land managers and owners

E. Lands and Realty

The following lands and realty decisions, designations, identifications and classifications are required in land use plans:

1. Lands for retention, proposed disposal, or acquisition (based on acquisition criteria identified in the land use plan.
2. Lands available for disposal must be identified by parcel or by specific areas.
3. Lands available for disposal under the Federal Land Transaction Facilitation Act of 2000 (FLTFA). The FLTFA amended FLPMA to allow retention by the BLM of receipts received from sale of land or interests in land under Section 203 of FLPMA or conveyance of mineral interest under Section 209(b) of FLPMA *provided a land use plan was completed prior to July 25, 2000.*
4. Proposed withdrawal areas including existing withdrawals to be continued, modified, or revoked (including how the lands would be managed if the withdrawal were relinquished and an opening order issued) (see 43 CFR 2300).
5. Land Classifications under Section 7 of the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, as amended (43 U.S.C. 315f). For any classification decision made through the land use plan, initiate the classification decision requirements (i.e., proposed and initial decisions required under 43 CFR 2400) at the time the decision document is issued for the land use plan.
6. Where and under what circumstances authorizations for use, occupancy, and development (such as major leases and land use permits) may be granted (see 43 CFR 2740, 2912, 2911, and 2920, respectively).
7. Existing and potential right-of-way corridors (potential corridors include existing right-of-way routes with the potential for at least one additional facility and thus can be considered a corridor if not already designated) to minimize adverse environmental impacts and the proliferation of separate right-of-ways.
8. Existing and potential development areas for renewable energy projects (e.g., wind and solar), communication sites, and other uses.
9. Right-of-way avoidance or exclusion areas.
10. Terms and conditions that may apply to right-of-way corridors or development areas, including best management practices to minimize environmental impacts and limitations on other uses which would be necessary to maintain the corridor and right-of-way values.

The existing land use plan as amended identifies specific land for disposal by tract. Tracts identified in the appendices of the 1987 decision and the 1992 amendment, but still in federal ownership, would qualify as FLTFA sales if carried forward into the revised plan. The existing plan provides general objectives for disposition and acquisition through exchange and provides specific land tenure adjustment criteria.

However, the three zone system used in more recent RMPs, was not available at the time of the existing plan.

Neither the existing plan nor the amendment contain a listing of existing withdrawals or identify any parcel for withdrawal. Five previously designated utility corridors were carried into the 1987 plan, these corridor were occupied by Bonneville Power Administration powerlines at the time. The plan also directs that all land in the district would be available for utility and transportation corridor development except one ACEC/RNA, two ACECs, the Chopaka Mountain WSA and the Juniper Dunes Wilderness Area. These areas were not specifically labeled using the current terminology of avoidance or exclusion areas.

The existing plan and amendment do not address renewable energy projects, communication sites, or other uses or provide terms and conditions to right-of-way corridors or development areas except as Standard Design Features (1987 ROD, Appendix C) "that could be applied at the discretion of the authorized officer."

Implementation activity has focused on land tenure adjustments. Exchanges have dominated, with some sales and other disposals. Using the flexibility in the existing plan the district has experienced a net increase of approximately 130,000 acres since 1987. A withdrawal review was completed in 1992 but was stalled in Washington DC. Trespass abatement has not been funded thus only a few actions have been completed.

In anticipation of the plan revision, district staff identified the need to meet minimum planning requirements, establish a 3-tier land tenure allocation system, revisit the existing ROW corridors and potentially tier to the Westwide Energy Corridor EIS, tier to the Wind Energy EIS, develop a list of proposed withdrawals, and revisit/expand the exclusion and avoidance areas—especially for corridors and wind energy development. Wind energy development is an emerging issue in eastern Washington with the potential to significantly impact BLM managed resources and workloads. District staff noted a need to review and update existing databases on transactions, acreage by county and planning unit, and existing withdrawals. Inventories, or re-inventories and mapping of withdrawals, communication sites, R&PP leases and patents, and rights-of-way authorizations were identified as tasks to be completed in support of the RMP. District staff suggested including a policy regarding consideration of private road access rights-of-way requests in the revised plan. State office staff suggested that Land Classification under Section 7 of the Taylor Grazing Act be specifically addressed in the RMP process to facilitate future land tenure adjustments.

F. Coal

This was not identified as a program area of interest or controversy in the planning area. Coal resources do exist within the district in western Washington outside the planning area.

G. Oil Shale

This was not identified as a program area of interest or controversy in the planning area. Oil shale resources are not know to exist within the district.

H. Fluid Minerals: Oil and Gas, Tar Sands, and Geothermal Resources

The following fluid mineral leasing decisions, designations, and stipulations for all BLM surface and subsurface resources are required in land use plans:

1. Areas open to leasing, subject to existing laws, regulations, and formal orders; and the terms and conditions of the standard lease form.
2. Areas open to leasing, subject to moderate constraints such as seasonal and controlled surface use restrictions.
3. Areas open to leasing, subject to major constraints on an area more than 40 acres in size or more than 0.25 mile in width.
4. Areas closed to leasing. Identify whether such closures are discretionary or nondiscretionary; and if discretionary, the rationale.
5. Resource condition objectives that have been established and specific lease stipulations and general/typical conditions of approval and best management practices that will be employed to accomplish these objectives in areas open to leasing.
6. For each lease stipulation, the circumstances for granting an exception, waiver, or modification. Identify the general documentation requirements and any public notification associated with granting exceptions, waivers, or modifications.
7. Whether the leasing and development decisions also apply to geophysical exploration.
8. Whether constraints identified in the land use plan for new leases also apply to areas currently under lease.
9. Long-term resource condition objectives for areas currently under development to guide reclamation activities prior to abandonment.

The existing plan, as amended in 1992, identifies areas open with standard stipulations, open with special stipulations, and closed to leasing. The plan differentiates between No Surface Occupancy (NSO) and restrictions greater and less than 6 months. Stipulations for leasing on US Department of Army, Corps of Engineers, US Federal Regulatory Commission, US Bureau of Reclamation, and the Yakima Firing Range lands are also included in the amended plan. These agencies manage surface resources where BLM manages sub-surface resources. Existing stipulations do not provide circumstances for granting exceptions, waivers, or modifications. Reclamation is not specifically addressed.

Implementation of the existing plan has proceeded and 654,267 acres of the 1,128,980 acres available for lease are currently under lease. Leased acres represent the majority of acres with minerals potential given known resource values and technologies. However, there has not been commercial development of these leases to date.

In anticipation of the plan revision, district staff identified a need to make major revisions to the Reasonably Foreseeable Development Scenario to address new economic information, new geophysical information, and technological improvements in exploration and development of oil and gas resources. The need to work cooperatively with other federal surface managing agencies to update stipulations was identified. Digitizing the existing BLM lease base and stipulation was identified as a workload associated with the plan revision. Concern was expressed regarding the accuracy of split estate data, particularly Bureau of Reclamation records related to ownership and leasing. It was noted that the Colville Tribe has expressed concern that Traditional Cultural Properties will be disturbed by exploration activities and will likely express similar concerns during the plan revision process.

I. Locatable Minerals

Required land use plan decisions and allocations include identification of lands open to the location of lode, placer, and mill claims. The claimant has statutory authority under the mining laws to ingress, egress and development of those claims. Identification of areas recommended for closure to the mining laws for locatable exploration or development (that must be petitioned for withdrawal) and any terms, conditions, or other special considerations needed to protect other resource values while conducting activities under the mining laws is also required.

The existing plan, as amended, continued pre-existing withdrawals on 7,220 acres (Hot Lakes RNA/ACEC and Juniper Dunes Wilderness Area) and did not identify any additional areas for withdrawal. Plan direction specifies that new withdrawal requests by other agencies will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Implementation of the plan has proceeded as directed, however, low level of activity with no noticeable trend suggesting future increases in demand.

In anticipation of the plan revision, district staff identified a need to specifically provide direction for abandoned mine lands, address occupancy and trespass, consider new withdrawals, and develop terms and conditions. In addition, 43 CFR 3590 has been revised as it relates to leasing of solid mineral resources on Native American lands. The revised plan needs to reflect this change and provide guidance. See Non-Energy Leasables, below.

J. Mineral Materials

Required land use plan decisions include identification of areas open or closed to mineral material disposal and any terms, conditions, or other special considerations needed to protect resource values while operating under the mineral materials regulations.

The existing plan identifies 21 existing mineral material sites and directs that "New material sites may be developed as needed if they are consistent with the protection of other resource value. Direction also specifies that all public lands are available for

recreational mineral collection unless subject to prior existing rights, such as mining claims.

Implementation activities have proceeded with approximately 639,396 cubic yards plus 30,855 tons of material removed. Thirty-five new sites have been established since 1987 and 33 sites closed. The district currently manages 68 mineral material sites.

In anticipation of the plan revision, district staff identified a need to overlay a map of high potential sand, gravel and basalt resources with other resource maps to identify avoidance areas and allow for consideration of high potential areas for retention (Zone 1). A desire to pre-designate areas as community pits in anticipation of increasing demand was also expressed. Washington Department of Transportation was identified as a potential data source for estimating future demand.

K. Non-energy Leasables

Required plan decisions and allocations include identification of the areas open or closed to non-energy leasing and development and any area wide terms, conditions, or other special considerations needed to protect other resource values while exploring or developing minerals under the non-energy leasable regulations.

The existing plan does not address this program area.

The Spokane District retains responsibility for non-energy leasables on Indian lands. This is a large responsibility that to date has only been addressed utilizing existing regulations on a case-by-case basis.

In anticipation of the plan revision, district staff identified a need to develop data displaying areas where BLM has management responsibilities and to work with respective tribes to develop management direction. The tribes are potential cooperating agencies because of their jurisdictions as surface managing agencies.

III. Special Designations

A. Congressional Designations

This was not identified as a program area of interest or controversy in the planning area. No national monuments and congressionally designated national conservation areas, national recreation areas, cooperative management and protection areas, outstanding natural areas, national scenic and historic trails, or forest reserves exist within the district. The Juniper Dunes Wilderness Area is a congressionally designated area with known management conflicts especially related to acquired lands, access, and recreation use.

B. Administrative Designations

Required land use plan decisions and allocations include provision of direction to manage Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) under the interim management policy (H-8550-1) until they are designated wilderness and identification of future management direction for these lands should they be released from wilderness consideration by Congress. Plans must also assess all eligible river segments and determine which are suitable or non-suitable per Section 5(d)(1) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, as amended (see BLM Manual 8351). Designation of BLM Scenic or Back Country Byways, national recreation trails, watchable wildlife viewing sites, wild horse and burro ranges, or other BLM administrative designations are also planning decisions.

The planning area contains one designated wilderness study area. The existing plan, as amended, identifies seventeen ACECs. Additional areas were nominated and considered in both the 1987 planning process and the 1992 amendment. The existing RMP specifies that management plans will be developed for all ACECs. One ACEC management plan has been completed (Coal Creek ACEC, April 2002), and 15 draft plans have been developed. The existing plan did not designate or consider during plan development BLM Scenic or Back Country Byways, national recreation trails, watchable wildlife viewing sites, wild horse and burro ranges, or other BLM administrative designations.

In anticipation of the plan revision, district staff expressed concern regarding the new requirements for inventory of "wilderness characteristics." Very few areas managed by BLM are sufficiently blocked to offer these characteristics, however, the scope and scale of the associated workload to provide documentation was of concern. Existing ACEC/RNA designations and nominations will be considered or reconsidered through the planning process. Land tenure adjustments completed since 1987 represent new lands to consider for ACEC/RNA designation; Horse Heaven Hills was specifically noted. Opportunities to consider Backcountry Byways, National Historic Trail, and American Heritage River designations exist, including water trails.

IV. Support

The planning regulations at 43 CFR 1601.0-5(k)(6) provide that land use plans may identify support needs. These are based on individual planning situations.

A. Cadastral

Required land use plan decisions and allocations include identification of planning boundaries so the geographic extent of land use decisions is clearly understood.

In anticipation of the plan revision, district staff recognized the need to utilize GIS software to describe the affected environment and analyze alternatives. Many programs identified the need to convert existing data and information into formats (soils, vegetation, transportation, minerals and lands) suitable for use with GIS software or conduct inventories and create geographic databases (VRM).

B. Interpretation and Environmental Education

Required land use decisions and allocations include identification of management goals and/or objectives for interpretation and environmental education, and describe the significant resources or areas that will be made available for interpretation/environmental education. For units of the NLCS, significant resource or area descriptions should be based on the designation or proclamation language establishing each area.

The existing plan does not address this program area.

Implementation of the district recreation vision has resulted in signage and interpretive exhibits to reduce inappropriate uses and trespass, and enhance visitor experience. The district volunteer program and existing MOUs and MOAs contribute to this program.

In anticipation of the plan revision, district staff concluded that opportunities for interpretation and environmental education exceed district capacity and that establishment of priorities, driven by recreation management, through the planning process would be helpful. The Ice Age Floods National Geologic Trail was identified as a specific opportunity. This trail, with the National Park Service as the interpretive lead, would bring together many interested parties and landowners to develop a network of touring routes extending across parts of Montana, Idaho, Washington, and Oregon. Potential exists for interpretive sites on BLM managed lands in the Spokane District.

C. Transportation Facilities

Required land use plan decisions and allocations include identification of land areas available or suitable for transportation facilities, types of transportation facilities that are appropriate for the planning area, limitations, if any, on the types or locations of facilities for specified area, and area(s) having in-place transportation facilities that should be removed. The plan should identify road repair, road rehabilitation, road construction, and maintenance standards appropriate to specific areas, plus any limitations, if any, on road repair, road rehabilitation, road construction, maintenance actions, and limitations, if any, on road density (i.e., miles/section) for specific areas.

The existing plan does not address this program area.

Implementation activities have been limited to maintenance and emergency closures.

In anticipation of the plan revision, district staff identified the need to utilize GIS software to support analysis, especially related to an anticipated expansion of areas where OHV use is limited to designated roads and trails.

ATTACHMENT A ----------

Spokane RMP Evaluation Questionnaire
March 5-6, 2007

Determine what needs to be in the plan:

Review required plan decisions (See Appendix C).

Identify any other decisions needed to resolve issues or meet program specific requirements?

Review the adequacy of existing plan direction:

Are desired outcomes described?

Are management actions and constraints described?

Have directed actions been implemented?

Do the decisions and direction meet existing management needs?

Is there sufficient detail to meet current planning requirements?

Discuss future plan direction and decision needs (building blocks for preplan):

What data is needed to support future decisions?

How could future decisions in this resource area impact other resources?

Identify possible cooperators, collaborators, interested groups and individuals.

ATTACHMENT B ----------

Participants

State Office:
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Gary Yeager - Assistant DM
Scott Pavey - P&EC
Scott Boyd - Fire Management Officer
Mike Shanahan - District Ranger/LE
Madilane Perry - Archeologist
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